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SUBJECT: KARITAS JOINS SLOVENIA'S ANTI-TRAFFICKING EFFORT

¶1. (U) Pol-Econ Chief, Pol Assistant, and Pol Intern met 17 July with Alojzi Stefan, Secretary General of Karitas Slovenia to discuss Karitas' role in anti-trafficking efforts. Karitas recently won a tender from the Ministry of Labor to provide secure shelter and assistance to trafficking victims in Slovenia. In June 2006, Karitas took on this role, replacing another Slovenian anti-trafficking NGO, Kljuc.

¶2. (U) To meet the demands of this new role, Karitas has acquired two new employees, including one professional social worker. Karitas has also tapped the experience and expertise of present employees and volunteers who have taken on new responsibilities in the development of this project. Karitas has set up a safe house, and established three locations for short-term emergency housing. Since beginning its work, the organization has successfully assisted three victims with food, shelter, counseling, translation services, and transportation.

¶3. (U) Stefan described the role of Karitas as a specific and limited, but essential element within the great number of forces mobilized to stop human trafficking. He believes that Karitas will be most effective by concentrating its energy on providing quality service and assistance to victims, which he sees as a natural extension of the programs it has been running for the past 15 years. Karitas will also strive for normalization of the system of victim assistance and plans to reapply for the tender after this year. Stefan is hopeful that the Ministry of Labor will offer a two or three year tender in the future and noted that a sequence of 1-, 3-, and 5-year government contracts is usually followed. Stefan believes that greater normalization will follow with a meaningful, long-term investment in the project.

¶4. (U) Though Karitas will focus its energy on meeting the immediate needs of victims while other organizations take on prevention, education, detection, and prosecution, Stefan also emphasized the value of cooperation between agencies. Stefan believes that the largest impact against trafficking can be made when all agencies collaborate to share information, experience, and knowledge. Karitas has already experienced beneficial cooperation with the police and court system, and Stefan has also planned a meeting this fall with Katjusa Kodele Kos of the anti-trafficking NGO Kljuc. Stefan and Kos will focus on building cooperation and complementary services without duplication. Stefan sees one possible area of coordination in the Kljuc ability to provide long term services through their Reintegration Program, which may be one place for victims to go when they leave Karitas' short-term emergency program.

¶5. (U) In addition to the value of coordination between different agencies within Slovenia, Stefan noted the vast potential of international coordination. As a part of an international network, Karitas Slovenia has collaborated with other Karitas organizations in Europe. For instance, when two of the victims in the Karitas program returned home to

Slovakia, they were met with the continued assistance of Karitas Slovakia, thanks to the coordination of the two organizations. Stefan has also sought help and advice through the Network of Christian Organizations Against Trafficking (COATNET) and plans to continue cooperation with these networks and others, possibly through the organization of region-wide trainings.

¶16. (U) Stefan welcomed the guidance and support of the USG and U.S. NGOs in continuing anti-trafficking efforts in Slovenia, Europe, and around the globe.
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